



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

LATE

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Higher Education
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by
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HB 547 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

Chair Choy, Vice Chair Ichiyama, and members of the committee:

House Bill 547 aims to provide students within the University of Hawai'i system with appropriate guidance and options to complete a major course of study, graduate within a reasonable time period, and understand the dynamics of the local job market.

The University of Hawai'i (UH) appreciates HB 547 and agrees fully that the steps outlined in the bill are keys to students navigating through college and progressing successfully to on-time graduation. Many of the elements, or similar elements, described in the bill's proposed guidance program have been identified as essential features in UH's strategies to increase the number of students who graduate and graduate on time.

As one example, campuses have developed academic maps (MAPS), an indispensable aid for students faced with sifting through an array of courses in a college catalog. Prior to MAPS, a student would have to identify the courses they must take for a specific degree, select both required and elective courses that fulfill requirements in general education and in their majors, and determine a course-taking sequence over a four-year period that will lead to graduation. Academic maps and other tools enable students to meet the multiple challenges of choice and selection, requirements, time and sequence by clarifying the desired pathway toward graduation.

More recently UH has introduced additional innovations that will contribute toward boosting college completion. An academic planner is an intuitive online academic map that continually recalculates and provides students with their optimal path to college completion. Much like a GPS in a car, if the driver misses an exit, the route is recalculated. An academic program velocity feature allows new, real-time measurement of academic program efficiency and identifies programmatic constraints and bottlenecks that impact the program's graduation rate, enabling specific recommendations for improvements.

These innovations and others collectively make up a Graduation Pathway System (GPS) that would enhance UH capacity in providing students with their individualized

optimal path to completion, focusing on students taking the right 15 credits each semester to support optimal paths and also can inform students about their optimal point of transferring to another campus. These innovations support student advising and transform a student's understanding and planning for successful college completion.

To build on these innovations and accelerate their development, UH would need support in further developing the technological backbone of the GPS system that boosts the ability of students and advisors to identify and track course and program activities toward graduation.

The state of Hawai'i has been nationally recognized for our graduation strategies and successes under the broad umbrella of the *Hawai'i Graduation Initiative* (HGI), efforts that focus both on individual student success and the well-being of the state. We very much appreciate HB 547 and its recognition of the key steps needed for additional progress.

The University of Hawai'i looks forward to continued discussion with this committee and working with you to outline specific needs to strengthen these services to our students, including the examples given here.

UH recommends using the ***Graduation Pathway System (GPS)*** as a name for this group of strategies focused on guiding students toward timely graduation.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to provide testimony.